

# State of South Dakota

SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2003

582I0685

## HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE ENGROSSED NO. **SCR 5** - 02/24/2003

Introduced by: Senators Ham, Albers, Bogue, Brown, Diedrich (Larry), Duenwald, Duniphan, Duxbury, Kelly, Kleven, Kooistra, McCracken, Reedy, Sutton (Duane), Symens, and Vitter and Representatives Adelstein, Bradford, Cutler, Engels, Gassman, Gillespie, Hennies, Klaudt, Kraus, Smidt, Valandra, Van Norman, and Weems

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Creating a South Dakota strategy for suicide prevention.

2 WHEREAS, suicide is consistently among the top ten leading causes of death in South  
3 Dakota. In recent years suicide has been the second leading cause of death in South Dakota for  
4 youth and young adults between the ages of fifteen through thirty-four. Indeed, suicide is the  
5 cause of death for about one hundred people every year in South Dakota; and

6 WHEREAS, between two and three thousand suicide attempts occur annually in South  
7 Dakota, resulting in hundreds of serious or disabling physical injuries and in mental and  
8 emotional stress to individuals as well as in emotional trauma and hardship to their families; and

9 WHEREAS, each suicide drastically affects numerous family members, friends, and  
10 colleagues who must grieve the death of a loved one, a grief that is debilitating for many people.  
11 There are approximately forty thousand people in South Dakota who have had a loss to suicide  
12 interrupt their lives; and

13 WHEREAS, the suicide death rate per one hundred thousand people in South Dakota is



1 about one-and-a-half times the rate of suicide in the United States, on average. The suicide death  
2 rate for people, ages fifteen to twenty-four, in South Dakota is twice the rate of suicide in the  
3 United States; and

4 WHEREAS, the suicide completion rate is very high for young people in South Dakota and  
5 extremely high for elderly white men and young Native American men; and

6 WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness deters suicide prevention by keeping  
7 people at risk of completing suicide from seeking lifesaving help; and

8 WHEREAS, the stigma associated with suicide deaths seriously inhibits surviving family  
9 members from regaining healthy lives and a sense of meaning in life; and

10 WHEREAS, suicide deaths impose an enormous unrecognized and unmeasured economic  
11 burden on South Dakota in terms of potential years of life lost and medical costs and in terms  
12 of decreasing the capacity of mourners to contribute to their work, their families, and their  
13 communities; and

14 WHEREAS, the causes of suicide are complex and multifaceted, involving biological,  
15 sociological, psychological, and societal factors; and

16 WHEREAS, even though the link between mental illness and suicide is well established and  
17 many suicides are preventable, there is still an urgent and ongoing need for the development of  
18 effective mental-health promotion and suicide prevention programs; and

19 WHEREAS, the opportunity is present now for a comprehensive, research-based response  
20 to suicide prevention because of recent and ongoing advances in clinical research, in the  
21 treatment of mental disorders, in basic neuroscience, and in the development of community-based  
22 initiatives for prevention; and

23 WHEREAS, suicide prevention efforts should be encouraged and supported to the greatest  
24 extent possible:

1       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Seventy-eighth Legislature  
2   of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the  
3   Legislature of the State of South Dakota recognizes that suicide is a significant problem in the  
4   state, and declares the prevention of suicide be made a state priority by strengthening the private  
5   and public entities charged with addressing the problem to be a state priority; and

6       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature acknowledges that no single suicide  
7   prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities; and

8       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature encourages the development and the  
9   promotion of accessibility and affordability of mental health services enabling all persons at risk  
10   for suicide to obtain effective services without fear of stigma; and

11       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature encourages the development of  
12   evidence-based initiatives dedicated to preventing suicide, to responding to those at risk for  
13   suicide and who have attempted suicide, and to supporting people who have lost someone to  
14   suicide; and

15       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature supports the creation of a South  
16   Dakota strategy for suicide prevention that will lay the groundwork for suicide prevention efforts  
17   that are designed specifically for use in South Dakota communities and based on the principles  
18   outlined in the national strategy for suicide prevention.